

## Doula Medicaid Resources from NHeLP

The National Health Law Program has been tracking efforts at expanding Medicaid coverage for doula care nationally and creating and sharing out our own resources on our [Doula Medicaid Project](#) webpage, which has a chart [tracking current state doula Medicaid efforts](#), including states that have enacted legislation and are in the process of implementing Medicaid coverage for doula care. You can see our roundup of [Current State of Doula Medicaid Implementation Efforts](#), published in November 2022. As of early 2023, there are now more than half of states that are either actively providing Medicaid coverage for doula care, in the process of implementing such coverage, or taking some statewide action related or adjacent to Medicaid coverage for doula care.

In March 2023, NHeLP published [Doula Medicaid Training and Certification Requirements: Summary of Current State Approaches and Recommendations for Improvement](#), which lays out the training and certification requirements for states that have implemented Medicaid coverage for doula care, and makes recommendations for how states can balance protecting quality of care with ensuring fair access for doulas who want to serve, or who are already serving, Medicaid populations. The same month, NHeLP also published [Private Insurance Coverage of Doula Care: A Growing Movement to Expand Access](#), which summarizes current state efforts looking to expand doula coverage in private health insurance plans.

In August 2022, NHeLP published [Doula Care Improves Health Outcomes, Reduces Racial Disparities, and Cuts Cost](#), which addresses the various benefits of doula care. In May 2022, NHeLP published on [Medicaid Coverage for Doula Care Requires Sustainable and Equitable Reimbursement to be Successful](#), which argues that sustainable and equitable reimbursement will also allow doulas to effectively support their clients, help to facilitate a stable doula workforce, and ultimately support a birth justice oriented framework.

In September 2022, in partnership with [National Partnership for Women & Families](#), [HealthConnect One](#), and [Tewa Women United](#), NHeLP published [Improving Our Maternity Care Now Through Doula Support](#).

In March 2022 we released our [California Doula Pilots Lessons Learned project](#), which collects a series of three publications, a panel discussion, and other resources around the implementation of ten doula pilot programs here in California focused on addressing racial health disparities, and in particular on providing free doula services to either Black pregnant and birthing people or Medicaid enrollees.

In May 2020 we published the results of a survey and series of focus groups of doulas across California. The survey and focus groups culminated in our publication of a report: [Building A Successful Program for Medi-Cal Coverage For Doula Care: Findings From A Survey of Doulas in California](#). We believe the findings and recommendations hold true for any state looking into Medicaid coverage for doula care. The report, as well as a series of fact sheets, timeline, and a [list of recommendations](#), can all be found at <https://healthlaw.org/resource/doulareport/>

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### **Additional Resources from Partners**

On March 4, a group of doulas, researchers, and scholars from Sexual Health and Reproductive Equity (SHARE) Program at UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare, SisterWeb San Francisco Community Doula Network, UCSF School of Nursing and Health Professions, UCSF Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, and UC Berkeley School of Public Health, published [What, When, and How Long? Doula Time Use in a Community Doula Program in San Francisco, California](#). This study of how SisterWeb doulas use their time, found that for every hour that doulas spent with a client in prenatal and postpartum visits, on average, they spent an additional 2.15 hours communicating with and supporting their clients in other ways. Also, SisterWeb doulas spent an average of 32 hours providing care for a client receiving the standard course of care, including intake, prenatal visits, support during childbirth, and postpartum visits.

In February 2023, [HealthConnect One](#) and Doula Data + Compensation Consortium partners [SisterWeb](#), [BirthMatters](#), [Accompany Doula Care](#), and [Ancient Song](#) published [Getting Doulas Paid: Advancing Community-Based Doula Models in Medicaid Reimbursement Conversations](#), a policy brief defining the services offered by and the role of community-based doulas, and exploring key considerations and recommendations for doula Medicaid reimbursement. You can also [watch a recording](#) of the February 23 webinar launch for the publication.

Watch the Dec 14, 2022 webinar on [Partnering with Community Doulas in Research: Agenda Setting and Program Evaluations](#), hosted by Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal & Child Health, which explored how to ensure that the voices of community doulas, doula clients, and communities of color, are included in research on doula care and services, including Medicaid coverage of doula services. The webinar featured [presentations](#) from Prof. Cassandra Marshall and Prof. Anu Manchikanti Gómez from UC Berkeley, and Ali Cuentos co-founder and Director of Evaluations of [SisterWeb San Francisco Community Doula Network](#).

In December 2022, [ASPE](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation) published [Doula Care and Maternal Health: An Evidence Review](#). Also in December 2022, [Center for Health Care Strategies](#) published [Covering Doula Services Under Medicaid: Design and Implementation Considerations for Promoting Access and Health Equity](#).

In October 2022, [National Partnership for Women & Families](#) published [Our Communities Hold the Solutions: The Importance of Full-Spectrum Doulas to Reproductive Health and Justice](#).

In August 2022, researchers at the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies published ["This Work That We're Doing Is Bigger Than Ourselves": A Qualitative Study With Community-Based Doulas in the United States](#), which examines the work experiences, related stressors, and stress management strategies of individual community-based birth doulas.

In April 2022, the [Community Doula Research Steering Committee](#) at UC Berkeley published a series of [project learnings](#) including an [illustration](#), [research prioritization list](#), and [final report](#) on Partnering with Community Doulas to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Equity.

In February 2022, researchers at the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies published [Addressing Systemic Racism in Birth Doula Services to Reduce Health Inequities in the United States](#), which examines various approaches to train, recruit, and employ doulas, as well as what system-level changes are needed to address health inequities in underserved communities and expand access to birth doula services.

[Advancing Birth Justice: Community-Based Doula Models as a Standard of Care for Ending Racial Disparities](#), by Village Birth International, Ancient Song Doula Services, and Every Mother Counts, has critical information on community-based doula care, advancing racial equity, and sustainable reimbursement.

Very informative series in The Lily/Washington Post in 2020 on Medicaid coverage for doula care: [State of Doula Care series](#). The series included articles specifically on the challenges in [Oregon](#) and [Minnesota](#) and reasons for the very low uptake of the benefit in both states. Additional data points from the series are also available [here](#).